

Focus Words

order | proposal | value | oppressive | revolution | stability

Raul: I swear! My parents are like...**oppressors**!

Tiana: What?

Raul: My parents! They act like those people we've been studying in social studies, the pharaohs in ancient Egypt. They're **oppressive**!

Tiana: So you're saying that your parents collect taxes from you and force you to build pyramids? Right. Okay.

Raul: No! But they canceled our family cell phone plan so they can save money for some dumb family vacation to Disneyworld. I can't call or text my friends anymore! My life is practically over.

Tiana: Sounds rough. Glad my parents didn't do that. They're pro-democracy.

Raul: Stop messing with me. Can't you see I'm in pain here?

Tiana: Well, how do your brother and sister feel about all of this? If you all feel wronged, maybe you can stage a **revolution** and get your parents to give your cell phones back.

Raul: They both could care less! My older brother has a job after school, so he can pay for his own cell phone plan. My nerdy baby sister is antisocial and never calls or texts anyone. I'm the only victim in this whole deal, and it's just plain wrong.

Tray: Look, man, think about it from your parents' perspective. They probably feel awful about not being able to pay for vacations and cell phones at the same time. They had to make a hard choice and they decided to go with a vacation that's going to give you great family memories for a long, long time.

Raul: Tray, I'm not saying I don't **value** time with my family. Of course I do! They have my back. But my friends are important to me too, and I need my cell phone to have their backs! Losing touch with my friends doesn't seem worth going on a vacation to hang out with my family. I'm with them all the time.

Ingrid: Raul, sometimes you have to take a hit for the team. Think of your baby sister! Disneyworld may be nothing to you, but I bet going there is like a dream come true for her. Doesn't her happiness seem worth sacrificing your cell phone?

Tiana: Hey, I'm all for making baby sisters happy, no matter what pains they can be, but I also don't think it's right to destroy Raul's happiness for an overpriced, and overrated, trip to see a bunch of grown people dressed up as mice and ducks. Raul, why don't you **propose** a cheaper and less commercial vacation destination to your parents, one that won't force them to cut off your cell phones?

Raul: I'm way ahead of you, Tiana. I did suggest going somewhere more affordable, and my parents said, "No!" Honestly, I think they just want other parents to be impressed because they take their kids to Disneyworld. My aunt and uncle took their kids to the Grand Canyon last summer and they can't stop talking about it. My parents are doing this just to look good, so they really are like the pharaohs of ancient Egypt. They make decisions that make them look great without listening to anyone or caring how other people feel.

Tray: Yeah, some pharaohs did do some pretty harsh things and the people didn't have much of a say, but pharaohs did provide **order** to the civilization, which benefited everyone overall.

Ingrid: Exactly. Like the pharaohs, your parents are making sure that you and your brother and sister have **stability** in your lives. Even though they don't have much money, they want to make sure you can still go on family vacations like everyone else. Are you sure your parents are only doing this to look good?

Tiana: Raul, let me take this one. So Ingrid, Raul can't text his friends and that's causing some major **instability** in his life. His social life is over without a cell phone. His parents can keep the family more in **order** by keeping the phones and vacationing in some place other than the magnificently expensive "Magic Kingdom."

Raul: Ugh! I hope you guys don't mind getting emails from me.

Tray: What's email?

Raul: Right. Well, I guess going to Disneyworld works out since the only people who will be my friends from now on are mice and ducks.

Identifying Different Perspectives and Support

If the characters in the passage had a Spacebook debate, there would be two sides or claims. The two claims are defined in the boxes to the right. Each character would have to support either Claim 1 or Claim 2. Then, each would provide reasons to support his or her claim in the comments box. Fill in the blanks below to get a sense of how the debate would go between the two sides. Be sure to include at least one focus word in each update.

Claim 1:

Raul's parents are **oppressive**. Taking away Raul's cell phone to save money for something he does not care about is unjustified.

Claim 2:

Raul's parents are **NOT oppressive**. Taking away Raul's cell phone for an important family experience is justified.

spacebook



Raul

Studies at Cool Middle School
From Downtown, U.S.A.
Interests: Fighting parental **oppression**, texting for freedom

I support Claim ____ and my reason is:



Ingrid

Studies at Cool Middle School
From Downtown, U.S.A.
Interests: **Stability** and happiness for younger siblings

I support Claim ____ and my reason is:



Tray

Studies at Cool Middle School
From Downtown, U.S.A.
Interests: Appreciating parents for providing **order** and ice cream

I support Claim ____ and my reason is:



Tiana

Studies at Cool Middle School
From Downtown, U.S.A.
Interests: **Revolutions** against overpriced vacations

I support Claim ____ and my reason is: